

FROM THE EDITOR

Hiring and Retaining Good Teachers



Do you want to know a secret to retaining good teachers? If you live in a small, rural district that pays low salaries compared to others in your surrounding area, then consider starting a dating service.

That's what a human resources director in one district told me several years ago. Watching his second- and third-year teachers leave for a nearby county school district with the amenities young singles want, the director just shook his head and sighed.

"If I could just start a dating service, and get my young single teachers to get married to someone local, then I would stand a much better chance of keeping them, because that's when they get involved and stay involved in the community," he said, only half-joking.

Moving into the summer months, districts are searching for good candidates, and an unintended consequence of the flagging economy is that more qualified candidates are considering the teaching profession as a career. However, as Senior Editor Del Stover reports, starting on Page 21, many retirement-eligible employees are sitting tight. And there's not exactly an embarrassment of riches when it comes to hard-to-fill positions such as math, science, and

special education.

The result is that HR directors are finding themselves in something of a buyer's market, but in the long run, that dating service idea might not be so bad after all.

Before you read Del's story, however, be sure to check out the two pieces by Senior Editors Naomi Dillon and Lawrence Hardy on the struggles districts face when trying to educate growing numbers of homeless students.

Naomi's story, which starts on Page 14, looks at what districts are doing in several states, while Larry's focuses on families in Charles County, Md. His story, which starts on Page 18, looks at the relatively recent phenomenon of middle-class families who no longer have their homes due to the economy. Both stories are compelling reads that illustrate this sad problem.

Are you searching for a new outside-the-box program that can help your students improve? Then visit *ASBJ's* new Magna best practices database at www.asbj.com/magna. And if you want to read more about the database, check out the story on Page 45.

Until next month ...■

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief